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Revenue (1948) Department.

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[Despatch Abstract.]

Prohibition - Border problems - Co-operation of other Governments in the enforcement of Prohibition in the old Prohibition districts - Papers recorded.

Back Papers.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No	Department.	Date.

Further Papers.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
Ms	42162	Deal	19-X-50				

Prohibition Conference with the representative of the State adjoining Madras Province and Collectors of the Prohibition districts.

A meeting of the representatives of the Indian States adjoining Madras Presidency and the Collectors and Prohibition Officers of the dry districts was held on the 13th September 1947. at 11 A.M. at the Council Chamber, Fort St. George. The Hon'ble Mr. Daniel Thomas, Minister for Prohibition, presided.

The following persons were present.

1. Khan Bahadur Khalifullah Sahib Bahadur, Dewan of Pudukkottah.
2. Khan Sahib Syed Imanam Sahib, Dewan of Banganapalle.
3. Sri. J. Durgappa, Head Quarter Assistant to the Excise Commissioner in Mysore, Bangalore
4. Monsieur H. Norgues, Head of the French Revenue Department, Pondicherry.
5. Sri. D.S. Hanumantha Rao, Political Member, Sandur State.
6. Sri. G. Narayana Rao, Inspector of Excise, Excise Intelligence Bureau, Mysore.
7. Sri. V.N. Kudva, Commissioner of Excise, Board of Revenue, Madras.
8. Mr. Underwood, Inspector-General of Police, Madras.
9. Sri. A.L. Devassy, Commissioner of Excise, Cochin.
10. Khan Bahadur Monzoor Hussain Sahib Bahadur, Assistant Secretary, Board of Revenue.
11. Rao Sahib M. Rajappa Bangara, Collector of Kurnool.
12. Sri. A. Dorairaj, Collector of Guntur.
13. Mr. F.W.A. Morris, Collector of Coimbatore.
14. Mr. J.F. Saunders, Collector of South Kanara.
15. Sri. K.N. Anantaraman, Collector of Bellary.
16. Mr. H.C.M. McLaughlin, Collector of Tanjore.
17. Sri. Ramavarma Raja, Collector of Madura.
18. Mr. J.C. Griffiths, Collector of Malabar.
19. Sri. G.E. Muthirulandi, Personal Assistant to the Collector of Salem.
20. Sri. T.N. Krishnamurthi, District Prohibition Officer, Cuddapah.
21. Sri. R. Subba Rao, District Prohibition Officer, Kurnool.
22. Sri. R. Seshagiri Rao, District Prohibition Officer, Bellary.
23. Sri. A. Venugopal Rao, Special Development Officer, Bellary.
24. Rao Sahib S. Nityanandam, Special Development Officer, Coimbatore.
25. Rao Sahib K. Muthu Krishna Naidu, Special Development Officer, Cuddapah.
26. Sri. M. Sanjivi Pillai, Special Development Officer, Salem.
27. Sri. G. Chandrasekaran, Special Development Officer, Anantapur.
28. Sri. P.L.N. Naidu, Principal, Prohibition Training School, Bellary.
29. Mr. P.S. Viswanatha Ayyar, Joint Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

11A. Sri. R. Kotiswara Rao, Collector of Anantapur.

The Hon'ble Mr. Daniel Thomas in his opening remarks said that during the 1937 Congress Ministry prohibition was introduced in four districts. The Advisers' Government which came into being after the Ministry resigned office in 1939 gave up prohibition after a few years. When the Congress Ministry again came into power in 1946, they re-introduced Prohibition in 8 districts. By October 1947 eight more districts would go dry, w hich meant that 2/3rds of the Province would come under prohibition on that date. It was programmed to make the whole Province completely dry by 1st October 1948.

Proceeding, the Hon'ble Minister said that complete success in a policy like Prohibition might not be possible at present. There were bound to be voilations and breaches

of the Prohubition Law and Rules just as there were breaches and violations of the ordinary laws of the land. But taking the problem as a whole, if they were able to implement the Prohibition policy with a reasonable measure of effectiveness, there could be no doubt about the resultant economic, social and general uplift of the large percentage of the people of the Province. Drink addicts formed about 10 per cent of the population of Madras. There were three class.among them, namely (1) those who took toddy; (2) those who went in for arrack; and (3) the so called higher section who went in for foreign liquors like, whisky, gin, etc. So far as he was able to gather from a tour of the Prohibition districts, he could tell them, with some certainty, that most toddy and arrack drinkers had abstained from drinking, at any rate 70 to 80 per cent of them had abstained either by choice or by compulsion. There were, however, some people who seemed to think that life would be worth nothing if they could not get some drink in some form or other, by some means or other, or in some place or other. Taking advantage of this, some people manufactured arrack clandestinely and supplied ~~to~~ it to these men at exorbitant rates. This illicit manufacture of arrack could be prevented only by effective co-operation on the part of the people and the officials.

Coming to the more immediate problem of introducing Prohibition in the districts bordering on the Indian States and French Settlements, the Hon'ble Minister said that this could be done effectively only with the active co-operation of the authorities concerned. On the general desirability of Prohibition, the Provinces and the States were all agreed. Bombay had adopted a certain plan and Mysore Government had a scheme for gradual restriction of drink and other Provinces also were implementing Prohibition in some way or other. In Cochin State also, some taluks were, to go dry in October 1947. But the Schedule of dates, and the ways and means adopted for introducing Prohibition differed from place to place. Therefore, it was necessary for this Government to secure the co-operation of the States before they introduced Prohibition in the 8 more districts to be taken up this year. A five mile belt area surrounding the boundary of the dry districts was quite necessary for the success of Prohibition. Apart from this, in a belt area of about 10 miles, restrictions should be imposed on the number of shops to be kept open, the number of trees to be tapped, etc. This would facilitate to maintain the <u>status quo</u> in the adjoining States and prevent any extraordinary demand for drink in those wet areas. There was again the question of illicit importation of liquor from one territory to the other. All these things could be attended to efficiently if the States and the Government worked in active co-operation with each other.

In conclusion, the Hon'ble Minister invited also the Collectors of the Prohibition districts to give their views on the points he had mentioned. He requested the representatives of the States to inform him of the Prohibition measures they had taken in their respective States, the measures of success they had achieved, and the extent of the areas where they had introduced Prohibition. All suggestions that would facilitate coordinated effort were welcome.

The representative from the Mysore State stated that the policy of the State was to introduce prohibition within a period of five years, by stages. The State had already cut down the supply by twenty per cent this year, and as a consequence, the number of shops which totalled over 3,000 had been reduced by 611. The Mysore Government had already fixed a belt area of five miles from the Madras Provincial border and the Mysore Officers were frequently exchanging views with the Madras Government Officers in the border districts of Kurnool, Bellary, etc with a view to establish the maximum of co-operation between the two Governments. In the nine taluks of the Mysore State which adjoin South Kanara, Malabar and the Nilgiris, out of the 500 odd shops that existed before, only a few remain working. The Mysore Government would certainly consider whether the number of shops in the border areascould not be cut in a greater degree, within the twenty per cent fixed for the year; but that could be done only from the next

year as the shops had already been leased out on 1st July. As regards illicit distillation, they had a special mobile staff for dectection purposes, in addition to the usual staff.

The Commissioner of Excise, Cochin who represented the State said that in Cochin the Prohibition Act was practically the same as the Madras Act. The State's policy was to introduce prohibition in stages and they had decided to being with Chittoor taluk. This taluk consisted of two bits, one of which was completely enclosed by Coimbatore and Malabar and the other was bounded by Malabar on 3 sides. He thought complete prohibition could be achieved in four or five years. He did not know what kind of co-operation was expected from his State. The Chairman desired to know if, in case prohibition was introduced in British Cochin the State would be prepared to consider the idea of making Mattancheri, the adjoining State territory in the same island, also dry. The representative replied that he would place the proposal before his Government for their decision.

The Collector of Coimbatore said that not many difficulties were experienced in the working of Prohibition in his district. There was a certain amount of transborder visiting of Mysore by addicts from Kollegal. The Travancore border consisted of thick jungle and there was no such problem there.

The Dewan of Banganapalle State stated that his State also was taking definite steps for restricting the consumption of drinks. Before the war, the consumption in the State was 600 gallons, but after prohibition was introduced in the Kurnool district, the quantity rose to 2,000 gallons; the State however had recently taken steps to bring it down to 1,000 gallons. As regards belt area, Banganapalle was so small in extent that it would be difficult to give a belt area of three miles, but they were considering whether a two mile belt area could not be created. The State was also trying to cut down the number of shops and to put down illicit distillation.

The representatives of the Sandur State stated that the excise revenue of the State was 1 lakh in 1945-46 before prohibition was introduced in Bellary and the present revenue was between Rs. 1½ lakhs and Rs. 2 lakhs; and this figure included revenue from ganja, opium etc. It was therefore an exaggeration to say, as had been said by some persons, that the revenue of the State had gone up by leaps and bounds as a result of prohibition in Bellary district. The factors contributing to an increase in the revenue were the reopening of the manganese factory, the large number of labourers employed by the tobacco factory and the change over on the part of some drinkers from toddy to arrack because of the stoppage of import of toddy from Kudligi taluk. The State authorities themselves wanted to introduce prohibition in the State; he had already assured the Collector of Bellary and he gave the assurance once again to the Madras Government now, that the ruler would co-operate to the utmost extent possible in seeing that prohibition in Bellary was made a success. Before prohibition was introduced in Bellary the quantity of toddy imported into Sandur from Kudligi taluk in Bellary was 1,500 gallons and there was no manufacture of arrack in the State. 320 gallons of arrack were being supplied to the State by the distillery at Bellary from the year 1907. In 1945-46 the State authorities requested the Government of Madras to increase the quantity to 600 gallons and this was done. And after the introduction of prohibition in Bellary the quantity had gone up to 900 gallons but as he said the reason for the increase was to be found in the reopening of the Manganese factory and the employment of coolies by the tobacco factory. To a question from the Chairman whether the State could not bring down the quantity to the original level of 320 gallons, the representative said that as the question depended more on the ways and means of making up the consequent loss of revenue he would place the matter before the State authorities for consideration.

Mr. K.N. Anantaraman, Collector of Bellary pointed out that as regards the Sandur State, the increase had been from 320 gallons of arrack, to 1,050 gallons. Something must be done to bring the figure

down. He understood that the Hyderabad State proposed to have a belt area of three miles. In his opinion, at least a five-mile belt area was necessary if prohibition was to be effective.

The Dewan of Pudukkottah remarked that if the Conference had been convened some six months ago, the State would have been better able to see that prohibition in the border districts was a success; but as it was now late in the year, nothing much could be done as regards the location of shops in the border areas. The Pudukottah State had in fact for the past few years been controlling arrack, and he would give the assurance that the quantity would be kept at the same level. As regards toddy, he had no objection to limit the number of trees and able to shift the border shops beyond a three-mile belt area. As regards the policy, however he regretted that he could not agree to complete prohibition. His State had an idea of limiting drink to the prople who were drinking at present avoiding issue to women and children and also of limiting the quantity by adopting system of rationing. That, he thought would be a more effective method of achieving prohbition in a period of say, fifteen years, which was not a long period in the history of a nation. On the whole he was ready to co-operate with the Madras Government to the maximum extent possible.

The representative from French India whose speech was translated by an interpreter said that there was a proposal to cut down drink by 50 per cent; coming up for consideration before the French India Assembly at Pondicherry on Monday, 15th. He requested the Madras Government to address his Government officially and also to depute some officers there to explain the Madras proposals, so that the Assembly might consider the subject and come to a decision. To a question from the Chairman whether it would not be better to make Karaikal totally dry when prohibition was introduced in Tanjore, and also make Mahe dry when Malabar was to have prohibition, and to make up by a smaller cut in Pondicherry itself, the representative replied that those were questions to be examined by the Assembly which was commencing its session on 15.9.1947. He requested that a representative of the Madras Government be deputed for explaining these proposals to the Assembly after due intimation, of the date of his coming.

The Collector of Malabar was of the view that unless the Cochin State cooperated fully, it would be practically impossible to enforce prohibition in British Cochin. He also thought that the belt area should be at least five miles. He also stated that the shops in Mahe had already been sold for the current lease.

The Collector of South Kanara, Mr. Saunders, said his problem was mainly one of illicit distillation and illicit tapping. The District was full of jungles and enforcement was no easy matter.

The Collector of the Nilgiris, Mr. T.S. Ramchandran made the following suggestions, viz. (1) that arrack should be completely abolished in all the Tamil districts including South Arcot, Ramnad and Tinnevelly; (2) that an alternative use for arrack should be found by using it for manufacture of power ~~arrack should be~~ alchohol; (3) that in the matter of prohibition -- as was suggested by Mahatma Gandhi in regard to cow-slaughter - the Madras Government should proceed more by way of persuasion and education; (4) that in the prohibition and non-prohibition districts, a prohibition pledge should be taken by all officers and that in every weekly shandy, people should be asked to take or renew the pledge, and by collecting statistics of the number of people who so take the pledge, adopt the method of graddually reducing the quantity of liquor and the number of shops in proportion to the number of those who had not taken the pledge; and (5) lastly, to find out alternative uses for the toddy. He was told that it has good fertilizer value.

Sri. R. Bangara, Collector of Kurnool, could not understand why when the Hyderabad State was willing to give a five mile bet are

(as he understood from the Commissioner of Hyderabad) the Madras Government were asking only for a three-mile belt area.

As regards Banganapalle State he stated that the distillery which was formerly at Tadpatri had now gone over to Banganapalle; and that the quantity also had gone up from 600 gallons to 3,000 gallons. He also suggested that the sub Inspector whose services had been lent to the State might be given power to have some control over the distillery in the State.

The Dewan of Banganapalle promised that the points raised by the Speaker would be duly examined by the State authorities.

Rao Sahib K. Rama Varama Raja, Collector of Madura pointed out that within the belt area of five miles from the Madura Border, there were four or five shops on the Travancore side. Those shops should be removed to the interior. Hon'ble Minister observed that the Travancore Durbar should be addressed ,after a list of the shops was obtained from the Collector of Madura.

The Collector of Tanjore, Mr. Melaughlin, said that of all the prohibition districts, Tanjore was likely to give the biggest headache. There was the Pudukottah State and also Karaikal; and there was also the smuggling from Ceylon. He knew that at present there was an international smuggling gang whose activities had been going on for some years, who were handling opium, cocaine, etc. between Tanjore and Ceylon, and taking rice from Tanjore. He understood the smugglers had a regular intelligence service too. They had half a dozen motor launches and a good staff; and they also seemed to hold a licence from the Ceylon Government. Unless something was done to tackle the question, he was afraid prohibition in Tanjore could not be made a success. Mr. Saunders agreed with Mr. Melaughlin and said that the Government of India had been addressed to provide coastal patrol launches. Mr. Underwood, ~~the~~ Inspector-General of Police said that these launches, to be effective, should be based on Mandapam and not on Madras. The Government of India could be addressed.

Sri. Dorairaj, ~~the~~ Collector of Guntur pointed out that so far as his district was concerned there was likely to be smuggling of liquor by ferries from Hyderabad, across the Kistna river. The Collector of Cuddapah, Mr. R. Somalayappan said his problems was a purely internal one.

The Chairman in winding up the Proceedings said that he was greatly encouraged by the deliberations of the Conference; public opinion was an uncertain factor; it varied with persons and places. There had been a good deal of criticism recently of the Madras Government's prohibition policy, especially with regard to the eight districts in which it had been originally introduced, that it had not been a complete success. As he had already said, there was no question of ~~a~~ was inevitable, due to local conditions and human nature. Even allowing for such reasonable leakages, the question was whether there had been sufficient progress in implementing prohibition.

One great difficulty experienced in the course of the administration of prohibition was the contiguity of 'wet' areas in Indian States and the importation of illicit liquor from those areas into the Madras dry districts. There was a proposal to tighten the Act/and come back drunk should be penalised. While he agreed that there would be difficulty in working such a provision he thought it was a necessary provision, if prohibition was to be made more effective in the present dry areas.

In his opinion, the next important thing was to get greater co-operation from the Indian States. It was practically unanimously agreed that prohibition as a policy was a sound and wholesome one, and it was also agreed he thought, that ~~if~~ there would be

difficulties, in its practical working. The success of the measure therefore depended a good deal on public co-operation and also the co-operation of the different State and Provincial authorities.

One of the important results of this Conference was that they had begun to understand each other. The Madras officials had placed their difficulties before the State representatives and the State representatives had given assurances of co-operation and support in the carrying out of our policy. After all, India was one and indivisible and when we were all working for the common good of the country, it was necessary that we should stand shoulder to shoulder in implementing any policy for the good of the people. They had all come to some understanding by which he hoped prohibition could be enforced more effectively in the future than in the past. When therefore this Government introduced prohibition in eight more distric from 1st October 1947, he was sure there would be less of difficulties encountered and more of smooth working of prohibition.

He was glad that the Collectors of some of the districts had attended the Conference and heard the assurance given by the States representatives. He was also glad that the French-India representativ had come and given the assurance that the French-India Assembly would co-operate with us in enforcing pohibition in the border districts. He therefore ~~sh~~ earnestly hoped that in the period 1st October 1947 to 30th September 1948, some of the difficulties experienced in the past would be surmounted and there would be greater and greater co-operatio between the officials and authorities concerned. Thus they would be able to move onward and achieve a greater amount of happiness and well being of a larger and larger number of fellow beings.

After the Chairman had once again expressed his gratefulness to those who had attended the Conference, and wished them a pleasant sojourn in Madras and a safe return to their places, the conference terminated.

P.S. Viswanatha Ayyar,
16.9.1947.

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REVENUE DEPARTMENT

The letters in which the adjoining States and the Consul General for India in the French Establishments were addressed when prohibition was extended to 8 more districts from 1.10.1947, have been formed into two separate files. No further action is necessary in this file. This may be recorded

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4.1.1948.

G.O. Ms. No. 105, Revenue, dated 20.1.1948.

Prohibition - Border problems - Co-operation of other Governments in the enforcement of Prohibition in the old Prohibition districts - Papers recorded.

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/True copy/

S. Jayaramachari
30/3/57

Office Assistant,
Madras Record Office.

y.s.

30/3/57